Compulsory Military Service and Opinions Toward Cross-strait Relations: Evidence from Taiwan's 2013 Military Reform

Chen-Hsuan Liao*

The University of Tokyo

Abstract

This study investigated the impact of Taiwan's military policy on the attitudes of young males towards cross-strait relations. In 2013, the Taiwan government reduced the mandatory military service from one year to four months. According to the new policy, Taiwanese males born before January 1, 1994, are required to serve for 1 year, while those born after that date have a reduced service period of four months. Using comprehensive survey data and the regression discontinuity design, the study found that Taiwanese males who underwent shorter military service were more inclined to identify as Taiwanese and support Taiwan's independence. Additionally, the research indicated that the reform also influenced people's voting behaviors. In Taiwan's 2020 presidential election, males who completed four months of military duty tended to support pro-independence candidates. These results were attributed to people's expectations regarding potential conflicts between Taiwan and China.

---

* Graduate School of Public Policy, The University of Tokyo, 7-3-1, Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0033, Japan (e-mail: chliao@g.ecc.u-tokyo.ac.jp).

1. Introduction

Taiwan, or the Republic of China (ROC), is considered one of the world's most dangerous places (The Economist, 2021). Taiwan and China have struggled for sovereignty for over three-quarters of a century. Military rivalries between the two governments mainly concerned whether Taiwan should declare independence or be forcefully reunified with China. Recently, the outbreak of the Ukraine–Russia War has invoked fear of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. In addition, Taiwan's geographic position highlighted its importance in China's intensified geopolitical confrontation with the United States (Green and Talmadge, 2022b). With China's escalating military threat, it is imperative to understand the mindset of Taiwanese people, particularly young males, who would constitute the backbone of the Taiwanese military in the event of war. After enduring 75 years of the Chinese Civil War, do the Taiwanese still consider themselves Chinese, or have they developed a Taiwanese identity?

Regarding cross-strait relations, are the Taiwanese in favor of unifying with or being independent from mainland China? Do Taiwan's military policies affect people's attitudes toward cross-strait relations and expectations surrounding potential warfare? Do these attitudes translate to certain political behaviors? This study aims to answer these questions by investigating how Taiwan's 2013 military reform influences Taiwanese attitudes toward cross-strait relations and relevant political behaviors.

For more than 90 years, Taiwan has implemented its universal male conscription. In 2013, its government enacted a military reform that reduced the length of military service from one year to four months. Under this policy, military service shall be for one year for

Taiwanese males born before January 1, 1994, but only four months for those born after that date. This study discusses this exogenous shock on people's service duration to evaluate how military service reduction affects attitudes toward cross-strait relations and voting behaviors. Using the Taiwan Social Change Surveys (TSCS) from 2013 to 2022, I quantified national identity and attitude into dummy variables, indicating whether respondents adopted a Taiwanese identity and supported Taiwanese independence. Specifically, if they self-identified as Taiwanese, Taiwanese identity took a value of 1 and 0 otherwise (as Chinese or both). The Taiwanese independence dummy took a value of 1 if respondents supported Taiwan's independence and 0 if they supported unification with China or the status quo. In addition, TSCS 2020–2022 waves surveyed political behaviors, allowing for a further examination of whether these opinions translated to voting behaviors in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election. I constructed a dummy variable measuring respondents' support for pro-independence candidates in the election. This variable took a value of 1 if respondents voted for Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidates and 0 if they voted for Kuomintang (KMT) or People First Party (PFP) candidates.

The empirical results suggest that the military reform strengthens Taiwanese identity by 10.5% and increases support for Taiwan's independence by 44.4%. Exposure to shorter military service increases males' probability of voting for pro-independence candidates in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election by 11.4%. In sum, males who fulfilled their military obligations for a shorter period tended to identify as Taiwanese rather than Chinese and desired separation from mainland China. To examine the underlying mechanism, I explored two hypothetical questions in the TSCS about people's opinions

toward Taiwan's achievement of independence through peaceful means as well as its voluntary unification with mainland China. I generally found no significant attitudinal differences between males who underwent military service for one year and those who served for four months. These findings indicate that the impact of military reform diminishes with a peaceful resolution of the cross-strait dilemma, suggesting that the reform shifted people's attitudes mainly through altered expectations toward potential warfare between Taiwan and China.

This study contributes new evidence to the growing literature on the impact of national service on collective identity formation. Studies have shown that contact with different groups in the military helps people cultivate their national identity and reduces their likelihood of voting for a regionalist party in the election (Bagues and Roth, 2023; Cáceres-Delpiano, De Moragas, Facchini, and González, 2021; Okunogbe, 2024). Unlike the existing literature, this study focuses on the general impact of military service instead of intergroup contact in the military. Another research stream explored the effect of military service on personal beliefs and political behaviors. Using a random military draft lottery, Erikson and Stoker (2011) and Ertola Navajas, López Villalba, Rossi, and Vazquez (2022) examined the impact of military participation on personal beliefs and personality traits. In contrast with military recruitment, some scholars investigated how the abolishment of military conscription affects people's political behavior and institutional trust (Bove, Di Leo, and Giani, 2022; Fize and Louis-Sidois, 2020). Finally, Vlachos (2022) analyzed the impact of Wehrmacht recruitment on personal trust in political institutions. These studies generally offer rich evidence on how conscription changes people's personality, political preference, and trust toward the government. However,

because the core idea of conscription is to educate people and foster their patriotism to fight for their country (Alesina, Reich, and Riboni, 2020), studies have surprisingly offered little empirical evidence of how conscription builds national identity. This may be because fewer and fewer political entities have experienced separatism, with both separated parts owning their military at the same time. Unlike well-known examples such as Ukraine–Russia and North and South Korea, Taiwan has achieved neither formal independence from nor unification with China. Additionally, the armed forces of both governments are engaged in a state of confrontation. These facts make Taiwan an ideal scenario for investigating how conscription shapes people's Taiwanese identity and opinions on cross-strait issues.

This study strengthens various literature streams. First, it contributes new empirical evidence on collective identity formation.[1] In Taiwan's case, Bai and Li (2020) and Chen, Lin, and Yang (2023) explored the effect of authoritarian education and school curricula on Taiwanese identity; nonetheless, I focused on the impact of compulsory military service. Second, this study is linked to theoretical predictions regarding the effect of national-building policies on national identity (Alesina et al., 2020; Alesina, Giuliano, and Reich, 2021). Specifically, the current empirical findings highlight the crucial role of expectations surrounding potential war in shaping national identity. Third, this research

---

[1] The literature extensively examined the formation of a collective identity (Kranton, 2016) and identified significant effects from education (Bandiera, Mohnen, Rasul, and Viarengo, 2019; Cantoni, Chen, Yang, Yuchtman, and Zhang, 2017), language use (Clots-Figueras and Masella, 2013; Fouka, 2020), intergroup contact (Bagues and Roth, 2023; Cáceres-Delpiano et al., 2021; Okunogbe, 2024), repression (Dehdari and Gehring, 2022), media (Esposito, Rotesi, Saia, and Thoenig, 2023), and sports events (Depetris-Chauvin, Durante, and Campante, 2020).

extends the literature on the impact of compulsory military service on political attitudes and behaviors (Bove et al., 2022; Erikson and Stoker, 2011; Ertola Navajas et al., 2022; Fize and Louis-Sidois, 2020; Vlachos, 2022). This study also discusses how individual attitudes respond to an external armed threat (Balcells, Tellez, and Villamil, 2024; Gehring, 2022). Finally, this study offers insight into the triangular relation between the United States, China, and Taiwan (Glaser, 2021; Glaser, Weiss, and Christensen, 2024).

The paper is structured as follows: Section 1 introduces the study. Section 2 explains its historical background including policy reform. Section 3 describes the data. Section 4 discusses the empirical strategy, and section 5 reports the empirical results, robustness checks, and placebo tests. Section 6 discusses potential mechanisms. Finally, section 7 concludes the study.

2. Historical Background

2.1 Taiwan–China relations

After World War II, Japan ended its colonization in Taiwan, which then retroceded to China under the Nationalist Government. Not long afterward, the second Chinese Civil War broke out between the Nationalist Government (led by the KMT) and the Communist Party of China (CPC) in mainland China, lasting five years.[2] In 1949, the Nationalist Government lost control of most of its territory in mainland China and began retreating to Taiwan. However, the war had not ended yet, and several military conflicts arose

---

[2] The first Chinese Civil War (1927–1937) ended in response to the Xi'an Incident (1936) and the invasion of the Japanese Empire.

between the KMT and the CPC between 1950 and 1979.[3] Political scientists have collectively referred to these conflicts as the "Taiwan Strait Crises" (Pan, 2023; Scobell, 2000), of which those that took place in 1954–1955, 1958, and 1995–1996 are representative ones. Since 1996, no direct armed conflicts have taken place between Taiwan and mainland China, but mainland China remains a significant threat to Taiwan's armed forces (Green and Talmadge, 2022a; Kastner, 2015; O'hanlon, 2000; Wu, Wang, Yeh, and Chen, 2024).

In terms of the political dimension, Taiwan completed its transition toward democratization in the 1990s and experienced its first democratic transition in the 2000s. In the country's presidential elections in 2000, DPP candidates Chen Shui-bian and Lu Hsiu-lien garnered 39.30% of the votes, ending the KMT's 55-year rule in Taiwan. Four years later, Chen Shui-bian and Lu Hsiu-lien were reelected. From then on, Taiwan's political landscape has been primarily dominated by the DPP and the KMT. Regarding cross-strait relations, President Chen's administration and the DPP tend to express pro-independence attitudes whereas the KMT is more receptive to reunification with mainland China (Sullivan and Lowe, 2010; Sobel, Haynes, and Zheng, 2010; Tsai and Tsai, 2022).

In an August 2002 speech, President Chen advocated for "one country on each side," highlighting his pro-independence stance on cross-strait relations (Chao, 2004; Sullivan

---

[3] For ease of understanding, I used the terms "Kuomintang," "Taiwan's government," and "Republic of China government" interchangeably before the democratization of Taiwan. After democratization, Taiwan was not necessarily governed by the Kuomintang, so I primarily used the latter two terms to refer to Taiwan's central government.

and Lowe, 2010).[4] After President Chen's reelection in 2004, Chinese President Hu Jintao promulgated the Anti-Secession Law in 2005 to prevent Taiwan from pursuing independence (Ji, 2006). Article 8 of the law states, "The State shall use nonpeaceful and other necessary means if Taiwan independence is in force," indicating that Taiwan's independence would inevitably lead to a cross-strait war. In sum, given that mainland China remains a crucial threat to Taiwan's armed forces and may prevent Taiwanese independence through nonpeaceful means, the impact of Taiwan's military policy on Taiwanese attitudes toward cross-strait relations is an intriguing empirical question that remains unanswered.

2.2 Chinese and Taiwanese identity

2.2.1 Chinese identity

After the end of Japanese colonization in 1945, Taiwan retroceded to China under the Nationalist Government. However, the government lacked a carefully prepared retrocession plan when it took over the island as Taiwan was only a sideshow to their grander effort to reclaim mainland China. Worse, the native Taiwanese and mainland Chinese experienced significantly different state-building policies over the previous half-century (Chu and Lin, 2001).[5] To reconquer the mainland and effectively control the

---

[4] President Chen's speech was delivered at the 29th annual meeting of the World Federation of Taiwanese Association in Tokyo in August 2002.

[5] During the Japanese colonization period, the native Taiwanese experienced a prolonged period of stable social and economic development, making Taiwan more modern than most of mainland China. Additionally, Taiwan shared a unified system of administration, law, education, commerce, and agriculture under a repressive and omnipresent colonial state. The colonial rulers not only shaped a shared identity but also

native Taiwanese, the Nationalist Government implemented a series of coercive nation-building policies aiming to cultivate pro-regime and Chinese identity.[6] Specifically, the government announced martial law restricting Taiwanese political participation rights and suppressing all anti-regime activities.[7] It also established an authoritarian education system by introducing primary and secondary school students to a significant amount of pro-regime and China-related content (Bai and Li, 2020). The ROC government also launched an assimilationist language policy that imposed the use of Mandarin in public administration, media broadcasts, and schools (Bai and Li, 2020; Dupré, 2013). Overall, the ROC government created these policies to assimilate the Taiwanese and cultivate their Chinese identity to counterattack mainland China.

2.2.2 Taiwanese identity

The late 1970s saw a new cohort of postwar-generation political opposition that aimed to build electoral support on a platform emphasizing democratic reform and native Taiwanese identity (Chu and Lin, 2001).[8] After several political movements against the KMT regime in the 1970s–1980s, a new opposition party, the DPP, was declared in 1986. Not long afterward, Chiang Ching-Kuo lifted martial law and broke down the one-party

---

introduced new cultural values and worldviews to the native Taiwanese (Chu and Lin, 2001).

[6] The Republic of China (ROC) government proposed a "one-China principle," which claimed that there is only one China, Taiwan is part of China, and the ROC government is the sole legitimate government representing the whole of China (Chu and Lin, 2001).

[7] See https://law.moj.gov.tw/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=F0070002 for Taiwan's martial law. The website was accessed on March 11, 2024.

[8] Certain local elections allowed people to participate even during martial law. See https://web.cec.gov.tw/ElectionGallery/ for details. The website was accessed on March 11, 2024.

(KMT) authoritarian rule, appointing Lee Teng-hui in charge of political reform for democratization (Chu and Lin, 2001). This finally marked the formal emergence of Taiwanese identity and democratization, which became the DPP's and its supporters' core values (Chu and Lin, 2001; Chu, 2004; Chen, 2013; Schubert, 2004).

Three decades after Taiwan's democratization, scholars have extensively explored the evolution of Taiwanese self-identification (Bai and Li, 2020; Chu and Lin, 2001; Chu, 2004; Chen, 2013; Chen et al., 2023; Schubert, 2004). Regarding the causal evidence, studies highlighted the importance of education in the formation of Taiwanese identity (Bai and Li, 2020; Chen et al., 2023). Nonetheless, research has yet to thoroughly investigate the role of compulsory military service in fostering such an identity.[9] Hence, this study discusses the 2013 military reform to examine how the reduction in the service period has changed people's identity and relevant political behaviors. The following subsection explains the relevant policy background and details of the reform.

2.3 Taiwan's 2013 military reform

The victory of DPP candidates Chen Shui-Bian and Lu Hsiu-Lien in the 2000 presidential election marked the first rotation of political parties after Taiwan's democratization.[10] To adapt to modern warfare and streamline defense requirements,

---

[9] The Constitution of the Republic of China (Taiwan) states that people shall have the duty of receiving citizens' education, performing military service, and paying taxes by the law. See https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=A0000001 for details. The website was accessed on March 11, 2024.

[10] Five pairs of candidates ran in Taiwan's 2000 presidential election, including the nonpartisan candidates Soong Chu-Yu and Chang Chau-Hsiung with 36.84% of the vote, Kuomintang candidates Lien Chan and Siew Wan-Chang with 23.10%, New Party candidates Li Ao and Fung Hu-Hsiang with 0.13%, nonpartisan

President Chen's administration transformed military conscription to an all-volunteer - force system from the early 2000s (Setzekorn, 2014).[11] The development of this all-volunteer force involved gradual reforms to decrease the number of conscripts. Explicitly, the compulsory military service period was reduced by two months every year from one year and eight months in 2004 to one year in 2008.[12]

In Taiwan's 2008 presidential election, KMT candidates Ma Ying-Jeou and Siew Wan-Chang won with 58.45% of the vote, achieving the second democratic transition. Contrary to President Chen's administration, President Ma's administration aimed to build more friendly relations with China by quickly resuming the cross-strait dialogue, expanding charter flights, and announcing the "three No policies (no unification, no independence, and no use of force)" to enhance cross-strait relations (Lin, Wu, and Chou, 2012). During that period, cross-strait peace was a consensus in Taiwanese society. Additionally, an important campaign platform of President Ma was the completion of the transformation of Taiwan's military conscription to an all-volunteer-force system.[13] Finally, in 2013, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense implemented a military reform

---

Hsu Hsin-Liang and Chu Hui-Liang with 0.63%, and Democratic Progressive Party candidates Chen Shui-Bian and Lu Hsiu-Lien with 39.30%.

[11] The military's quality, rather than quantity, becomes increasingly important in modern warfare (Cohen, 1996).

[12] Although the ultimate goal of military reform is to implement an all-volunteer-force system, Taiwanese males must still fulfill military service obligations for a shorter period because of the Constitution of the Republic of China (Taiwan). Article 20 of the constitution states, "The people shall have the duty of performing military service in accordance with the law."

[13] Democratic Progressive Party candidates Hsieh Chang-ting and Su Tseng-Chang also promised to implement an all-volunteer-force system in Taiwan's 2008 presidential election.

that reduced the service period from one year to four months, dramatically changing the military service obligations of young Taiwanese males (see Appendix Table A.2 for details). Under this policy, Taiwanese males born before January 1, 1994, are subject to 1 year of military service, while those born after January 1, 1994, have four months of military duty. With January 1, 1994, as a cutoff, this meant that the military service period for younger males was only two-thirds shorter than that for older males. Importantly, because eligibility in the new policy is based on date of birth, determined 18 years ago, it is almost impossible for a male to adjust his military duty.[14] In sum, Taiwan's 2013 military reform offers an ideal natural experiment to examine how a shorter military service period shapes young Taiwanese males' opinions toward the Taiwan–China relation. Moreover, the reform mainly affects young Taiwanese males (born after January 1, 1994) who would constitute the main military force for any warfare in the near future, making it worthy of investigation.

3. Data

3.1 Sample construction

This study used TSCS data to evaluate the impact of Taiwan's 2013 military reform on public attitudes toward cross-strait relations. The TSCS is a nationally representative repeated cross-sectional survey conducted by Academia Sinica from the mid-1980s, aiming to trace the long-term evolution of Taiwanese opinions on political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural issues.[15] The TSCS obtains respondents'

---

[14] See section 4 for a detailed discussion.

[15] The Taiwan Social Change Surveys (TSCS) follow five-year cycles that rotate selective modules to

demographic information, including sex, birth year, birth month, education level, and religious preference. To maximize the sample size, I pooled together waves surveying attitudes and behaviors toward cross-strait relations. This pooled dataset contained 14 TSCS waves between 2013 and 2022 (see Appendix Table A.1 for details).

The combined sample included 25,698 individuals consisting of 12,514 males and 13,184 females. Because the research goal was to evaluate the 2013 military reform, it was essential to exclude samples that have been exposed to military culture or other military policies before the reform. First, I removed 635 respondents whose parents graduated from military or police schools to circumvent the potential impact of military education and military-style upbringing. Second, I focused on cohorts born between January 1989 and January 1999 to avoid the confounding effects of the 2008 military reform.[16] Finally, the main sample was composed of 1,953 men and 1,696 women.[17]

3.2 Measurement of political attitudes toward Taiwan–China relations

3.2.1 Taiwanese identity

To measure Taiwanese identity, I used the question *Do you consider yourself as*

---

capture social changes on similar topics over time. As of 2023, the TSCS has accumulated 72 survey waves and conducted 146,000 face-to-face interviews over the past 30 years. See https://www2.ios.sinica.edu.tw/sc/en/home2.php for a detailed introduction of the TSCS. The website was accessed on January 10, 2024.

[16] In 2008, Taiwan's government reduced the military service period from 1 year and two months to 1 year, which applied to male cohorts born between 1989 and 1993.

[17] The sample size was calculated from the pooled dataset. The number of respondents might be smaller for each specific survey question.

"Taiwanese," "Chinese," or "both (Taiwanese and Chinese)"? from the TSCS 2013q2, 2014q1, 2014q2, 2015q1, and 2020q1 survey waves. I then constructed a dummy variable measuring people's attitudes toward Taiwanese identity (Chen et al., 2023). The variable assumed a value of 1 if the respondent self-identifies as Taiwanese and 0 otherwise (as Chinese or both).

3.2.2 Taiwan's independence

For Taiwan's independence, I used the question *Concerning the future Taiwan-mainland China relationship, which comes closer to your view: Taiwan's independence, unification with China, or maintenance of the status quo?* from TSCS waves 2013q2, 2014q1, 2014q2, 2015q1, 2016q2, and 2020q1. I constructed a dummy variable to measure whether a respondent supported Taiwanese independence. Specifically, the variable took a value of 1 if the respondent supported Taiwan's independence and 0 if they supported unification with China or maintaining the status quo.

3.3 Measurement of political behaviors toward Taiwan–China relations

Besides attitudes toward cross-strait relations, this study investigates whether military reform further changed people's political behaviors. Specifically, I examined the likelihood of people turning out and voting for pro-independence candidates in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election, which involved three groups of candidates, Tsai Ing-wen and Lai Ching-te (DPP), Han Kuo-yu and Chang San-cheng (KMT), and Soong Chu-yu and Yu Sandra (PFP). [18] Because the consensus is that DPP candidates tend to support

---

[18] Finally, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidates Tsai Ing-wen and Lai Ching-te earned 57.13% of the votes and won the election. Kuomintang and People First Party candidates earned 38.61% and 4.26%

Taiwan's independence, I defined them as pro-independence candidates (Sullivan and Lowe, 2010; Sobel et al., 2010; Tsai and Tsai, 2022).[19]

To construct measures for respondents' turnout and voting decisions, I used the question *Did you vote in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election? If yes, which group of candidates did you vote for: Tsai Ing-wen and Lai Ching-te, Han Kuo-yu and Chang San-cheng, or Soong Chu-yu and Yu Sandra?* A dummy measure for voter turnout took a value of 1 if the respondent voted and 0 if they did not. For voting decisions, a dummy variable took a value of 1 if the respondent voted for DPP candidates and 0 if they voted for KMT or PFP candidates.

3.4 Other variables

In addition to attitudes and behaviors toward cross-strait relations, the TSCS comprehensively surveys respondents' birth information, educational level, religious preference, and parents' educational level and ethnicity. Birth information includes birth year, birth month, and gender, allowing me to determine whether a respondent is eligible for the military reform (see sections 2 and 4 for details). The remaining variables were measured in categorical form. Educational level includes junior high school or below, senior high school, university, and postgraduate. Religious preferences include Buddhism, Taoism, folk beliefs, Christianity, no religious affiliation, and others. Finally, parents' ethnicity includes Taiwanese (including Hoklo and Hakka), indigenous, Chinese, and

---

of the votes, respectively.

[19] The People First Party is a splinter of and belongs to the same political faction as the Kuomintang (Batto, 2019).

others.

4. Empirical Method

4.1 Sharp regression discontinuity design

This study implemented a sharp regression discontinuity design (RDD) strategy to evaluate how Taiwan's 2013 military reform affected people's attitudes and political behaviors toward cross-strait relations.

Because only Taiwanese males born after January 1, 1994, were eligible for the reform, I used January 1994 as the cutoff, with the birth cohort measured by year-month as the running variable in the RDD approach. This meant that Taiwanese males born after January 1994 (eligible for the reform) constituted the treatment group, while those born before January 1994 (noneligible for the reform) served as the control group. Figure 1 illustrates this design by drawing the unconditional distribution and linear fit of outcome variables along the year-month birth cohorts centered on January 1994. Panels A and B show that younger Taiwanese males have higher Taiwanese identity and support for Taiwan's independence. Specifically, the distribution of Taiwanese identity tends to contract from 0.8–1 among older cohorts to a narrower range of 0.9–1 among younger cohorts. Similarly, support for Taiwan's independence shifts from below 0.4 among older cohorts to above 0.4 among younger cohorts.

These descriptive trends suggest that younger and older male cohorts exposed to different military service durations hold distinct attitudes toward cross-strait issues. To formally evaluate the reform's impact, I estimate the following equation:

15

$$y_{isc} = \alpha + \beta_0 Reform_i + \beta_1 Month_i + \beta_2(Reform_i \times Month_i)$$
$$+ \boldsymbol{X_i'}\gamma + \theta_s + \lambda_c + \varepsilon_{isc} \tag{1}$$

where y_{isc} are political attitudes or behaviors of individual i, interviewed by survey wave s in city c. $Reform_i$ is a dummy variable, that is, whether or not individual i is exposed to the military reform. $Month_i$ is a running variable measured by the year-month birth cohort, recentered by January 1994. $\boldsymbol{X_i}$ is a vector of individual i's characteristics, including age, educational level, and religious preference. θ_s is the survey wave fixed effects, λ_c is city fixed effects, and ε_{isc} is an error term.

4.2 Validity of the sharp regression discontinuity design

Before the empirical results are interpreted, the RDD strategy must be checked for validity. This study followed a sharp RDD design, which assumes that Taiwanese males born before (after) January 1994 would be exposed to one year (four months) of military service. However, one data limitation is that the TSCS does not survey people's military status; thus, I could only rely on respondents' demographic details to determine their eligibility for a new military policy. This issue may bias the estimates if people can choose between one year or four months of military service. Here, I proposed several arguments suggesting that most Taiwanese males strictly followed the rule to determine their corresponding military duty, alleviating concerns about this issue, at least within the scope of this study.

First, the Act of Military Service System requires Taiwanese males to complete their corresponding military duty in accordance with the law; therefore, they are unlikely to

switch between one year and four months of military service.[20] If they violate the act, they will incur severe punishment regulated by the Punishment Act for Violation of Military Service System.[21] For example, a male of conscription age who attempted to avoid recruitment will be sentenced to imprisonment for under five years. Moreover, any person who tried to help others escape military service will be sentenced to 3–10 years of imprisonment. That is, a Taiwanese male faces several years of imprisonment whether they attempt to evade recruitment or whether someone helps him do so. Considering that the length of military service discussed in this study is one year or four months, a rational person would not choose to desert.

Second, statistical data from the Department of Conscription Administration have shown an extremely low number of Taiwanese males of conscription age who could not continue the military recruitment process. Figure 2 presents the percentage of Taiwanese males who did not engage in recruitment for various reasons between 2009 and 2018. For example, in 2012, 0.37% of Taiwanese males were born overseas, 0.52% had a physical or mental disability, 0.70% departed from Taiwan, 0.27% were imprisoned, and 0.09% were missing. On average, over 98% of Taiwanese males of conscription age follow the law and continue the recruitment process, making it unlikely that they will escape the corresponding military duty.

Third, although a Taiwanese male would find it difficult to evade or directly change

---

[20] See https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=F0040001 for detailed information. The website was accessed on February 8, 2024.

[21] See https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=F0120002 for detailed information. The website was accessed on February 8, 2024.

their military duty, they may exploit some indirect ways to do so, such as changing their birth date. For example, a male born before January 1994 may try to move his birth date after January 1994 to complete a shorter military service.[22] This is impossible, however, because no one could have precisely predicted that the military service period would be reduced 18 years ago and therefore change their birth date when they were just born. It is also unlikely for someone to change their birthday before conscription because correcting a date of birth registration requires a substantial number of supporting documents, including a birth certificate issued by a medical institution.[23] The data also shows no strategic behavior regarding the alteration of a birth date. Figure 3, panel A plots the distribution of birth months among the main male sample, from which we can observe that the percentage of people born each month is relatively stable and fluctuates around 8%, which preliminarily alleviates concerns about the potential manipulation of birth information.[24] In panel B, I further filtered the sample to males born six months before and after the cutoff, January 1994, and depicted a birth month distribution. If a strategic manipulation of birth month exists, the number of births concentrated after January 1994

---

[22] Another case is that a male born after January 1994 may try to move his birth date before January 1994 to complete a longer military service; however, a rational agent would not do that.

[23] The required supporting documentation for correcting a date of birth registration includes household registration information, a national identification card, a certificate of graduation from schools at all levels, a birth certificate, a certificate of military status, a certificate of court judgment, and other documents. See https://www.gov.tw/News3_Content.aspx?n=2ands=371556 for detailed information. The website was accessed on February 10, 2024.

[24] The fluctuation in the percentage of births across months aligns with the seasonal patterns in Taiwan. See https://www.hpa.gov.tw/Pages/TopicList.aspx?nodeid=649 for detailed information. The website was accessed on February 11, 2024.

will be observed to have a shorter military obligation. Nonetheless, the birth pattern does not support this viewpoint. Importantly, the number of births in January 1994 is fewer than in December 1993, suggesting no manipulation of birth months.

The final step was to examine the validity of the RDD strategy, of which the essential identification condition is the continuity assumption, holding that the conditional expectation of potential outcomes is continuous in a running variable at the cutoff (Lee and Lemieux, 2010; McCrary, 2008). Nonetheless, because the potential outcomes are counterfactual, researchers have validated this assumption by examining the continuity of covariates around the cutoff. Following the extant literature, I estimated equation (1) with the main male sample and presented visual evidence in Figure 4.[25] Panels A and B in Figure 4 present the RDD estimates on respondents' religious preferences and educational levels, respectively, which are all precisely close to zero, suggesting that the treatment and control groups are similar in these individual characteristics on each side of the cutoff. Panels C–F in Figure 4 further examine the continuity of respondents' parental characteristics. Again, the small and insignificant RDD estimates indicate no discontinuous jump in the value of parents' educational level and ethnicity around the cutoff (see Appendix Tables A.3 and A.4 for details).

Potential sorting behavior is another issue regarding the validity of the continuity assumption, which could be violated if individuals can select their birth year and month to shorten their military service. Figure 3 presents visual evidence of the distribution of

---

[25] Here, I estimated equation (1) by replacing the outcome variable with covariate and controlling for survey and city fixed effects.

the running variable, the year-month birth cohort, and suggests no sorting behavior around the cutoff. Overall, the corresponding continuity assumption is validated by highly balanced covariates and the absence of manipulation of the running variable.

This subsection provides significant evidence suggesting the use of the sharp RDD approach, but again, one limitation of the data is that the TSCS does not survey respondents' military status. While this fact helps mitigate concerns about experimenter demand bias of survey data (De Quidt, Haushofer, and Roth, 2018), the empirical findings are more appropriate to interpret as intention-to-treat effects of military reform throughout this study.

5. Main Findings

5.1 Compulsory military reform and attitudes toward cross-strait relations

This study examines how shortening compulsory military service periods changes people's attitudes toward cross-strait relations. I specifically examined Taiwanese males' attitudes toward Taiwanese identity and independence to measure their willingness to separate from mainland China. Table 1 presents the empirical results. First, column (1) shows the RDD estimates of equation (1) on Taiwan's identity without controls. I found that Taiwan's 2013 military reform increased people's Taiwanese identity by 8 percentage points at a 10% significant level. Columns (2) and (3) show that the addition of individual covariates and city and survey fixed effects improves statistical precision and slightly increases the magnitude of estimates. That is, Taiwanese males who undergo shorter military service are 9 percentage points more likely to identify as Taiwanese. These effects correspond to an approximately 10% increase compared with the baseline mean.

Regarding people's attitudes toward Taiwan's independence, column (4) of Table 1 demonstrates that reducing the military service period significantly increases one's probability of supporting Taiwan's independence by 14 percentage points. After controlling for individual characteristics in column (5), these estimates remain the same with minor standard errors. The addition of city and survey fixed effects in column (6) increases the estimated coefficient to 16 percentage points, indicating that Taiwanese males who experience the reform are more likely to support Taiwan's independence. Simply put, the RDD estimates remain significantly positive across multiple specifications, and the estimated effect is nontrivial, close to 44%, relative to the baseline mean. This means that shortening Taiwanese males' military service could make them feel more connected to their Taiwanese identity and motivate them to distance themselves from mainland China.

5.2 Compulsory military reform and political behaviors

We have known that Taiwanese males exposed to a shorter military service are more likely to associate themselves with Taiwanese identity and support Taiwan's independence. The next question, however, is whether they further translate their changed attitudes toward cross-strait relations into political behaviors. To answer this, I investigated Taiwanese males' voting decisions in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election, specifically whether a military reform motivates Taiwanese males to vote and whether they are more likely to vote for pro-independence candidates.

Table 2 reports the empirical results. Columns (1)–(3) show that shortening the compulsory military service period does not affect voters' participation in the election

regardless of additional controls.[26] In contrast, people's voting decisions would respond to the military reform. According to column (4), Taiwanese males who undergo a shorter military duty are 10 percentage points more likely to vote for DPP candidates. After the inclusion of individual controls in column (5), the RDD estimates remain consistent. Considering city and survey fixed effects in column (6), the magnitude of estimates slightly diminishes but with more minor standard errors, reaching a 95% statistical significance. Reducing the military service period does not change people's willingness to vote but significantly increases their probability of voting for pro-independence candidates by 9 percentage points (or 11% relative to the baseline mean) in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election.

5.3 Robustness check

These empirical outcomes suggest that Taiwanese males exposed to a four-month military service tend to assume a Taiwanese identity, support Taiwan's independence, and vote for pro-independence candidates compared with their older cohorts with a one-year military obligation. This subsection subjects these findings to several robustness checks.

The first concern pertains to the bandwidth selection in the RDD estimation. Since the military reform applies to young Taiwanese males born after January 1994 and the TSCS only surveys individuals aged 18 or older, the number of observations in the treatment group is relatively small. To balance sample size and comparability between the treatment and control groups, the main sample consisted of male cohorts born between

---

[26] In Taiwan, conscripted members are allowed to vote if election day takes place during a term of military service.

1989 and 1999 (a five-year bandwidth). To test whether the findings are robust to different bandwidths, I estimated equation (1) using a four-year, a three-year, and the optimal coverage error rate (CER) bandwidth proposed by Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014). Panel A in Table 3 presents the RDD estimates using different bandwidths on people's attitudes toward Taiwanese identity and independence. Columns (1), (2), (4), and (5) use shorter bandwidths and show that the RDD coefficients are not only consistent but also close to the main results. Columns (3) and (6) employ the optimal CER bandwidth, demonstrating that the magnitude of RDD estimates remains similar for Taiwanese identity but decreases for Taiwan's independence. Overall, the RDD estimates on attitudes toward cross-strait relations are robust to the choice of bandwidths. Panel B in Table 3 reports the RDD estimates with different bandwidths on people's voting decisions in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election. Similar to Table 3, panel A, using shorter bandwidths in columns (7), (8), (10), and (11), shows consistent RDD estimates with the main findings. In addition, using the optimal CER bandwidth would slightly decrease the magnitude of the estimated coefficient on voting for pro-independence candidates in column (12). However, the estimated effect becomes positively significant in column (9), indicating that the RDD estimates on voter turnout might be sensitive to bandwidth selection. Overall, almost all estimated effects remained consistent and robust to the selection of bandwidths.

Second, I used the parametric RDD estimation to test whether the main results estimated through the linear approach remained robust. Specifically, I estimated the second-order RDD regression with all male cohorts under a period of transformation into

23

an all-volunteer-force system.[27] Panels A and B in Table 4 present the empirical results for attitudes toward cross-strait relations and voting behaviors in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election, respectively. First, as seen in the main outcomes, columns (1)–(3) show nearly identical effects of the military reform on Taiwanese identity. With regard to Taiwanese independence, while columns (4) and (5) show slightly larger coefficients, columns (6) with full controls yield the same RDD estimate as in the main findings. Second, columns (7)–(9) confirm that the military reform does not significantly affect voting participation. Also, columns (10)–(12) produce comparable RDD coefficients with those in the main outcomes. In sum, the estimated effects in the main results remained consistent and robust to the parametric estimations.

5.4 Placebo test

Since Taiwanese females are not subject to conscription, they constitute an ideal placebo for the analyses. Following the same RDD in section 4, I used January 1994 as the cutoff, with the birth cohort measured by year-month as the running variable to define the fake treatment status for the female sample. Similar to the main analyses, I estimated equation (1) using females born between 1989 and 1999. Generally, the shortened military service period would not affect female respondents' attitudes toward cross-strait relations

---

[27] Following Gelman and Imbens (2019), I conducted a quadratic regression discontinuity design estimation to avoid potentially noisy and sensitive estimates caused by higher-order polynomials. A period of transformation into an all-volunteer-force system is between 2004 and 2022, so male cohorts born between 1985 and 2003 are included in the parametric analyses.

and voting behaviors.

Panel A in Table 5 reports the RDD estimates on females' attitudes toward cross-strait relations. Columns (1)–(6) show consistent patterns that the military reform has no influence on women Taiwanese identity and opinions on Taiwanese independence. Consistent with these findings, panel B in Table 5 offers further evidence that females hardly changed their voting behaviors in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election. Notably, most coefficients were only half the size of those observed in the case of males, suggesting that females were not responsive to superficial policy reforms.

To assess whether the estimated placebo outcomes are robust to bandwidth selection, I also estimated equation (1) using female samples with four-year, three-year, and the optimal CER bandwidth proposed by Calonico et al. (2014). According to Table 6, the effects of the military service period reduction on females' attitudes toward cross-strait relations and voting behaviors remained insignificant and were close to zero across different bandwidths. Moreover, I estimated the second-order RDD regression to examine whether the placebo results are insensitive to the higher-order polynomials. Table 7 reports the corresponding findings. Again, I found no evidence that shortening the compulsory military service period would change females' attitudes toward cross-strait relations and voting decisions in the election. Overall, Taiwanese females barely responded to the military reform. These facts also reflect that except for the military reform, no other confounding factor was associated with people's political attitudes and behaviors around the cutoff. In other words, the placebo tests suggest the validity of the

birth cohort RDD approach used in this study.[28]

6. Discussion

The findings suggest that Taiwanese males who underwent a shorter conscription period tend to identify as Taiwanese and advocate for Taiwan's independence from mainland China. Studies have observed that the effects of compulsory military service on people's opinions depend not only on the service itself but also on their expectations surrounding potential war (Erikson and Stoker, 2011; Ertola Navajas et al., 2022). Hence, Taiwan's military reform may influence people's attitudes through less military training and changed expectations toward cross-strait war. Although this study could not access data regarding the content of each respondent's military service, the main differences induced by a shorter service period could be summarized as follows. First, conscripts with a four-month duty generally perform their service in the training center and are less likely to be assigned to local military bases.[29] Second, because males exposed to the new policy only serve a four-month military term, they are all discharged as privates, the lowest military rank.[30] Third, four-month conscripts are less likely to participate in joint military exercises and training.[31] Therefore, conscripts serving a shorter military duty would have

---

[28] The argument is valid if no gender-based policy is associated with cross-strait relations except for military reform.

[29] Most 1-year conscripts were assigned to various military bases. Sometimes, they were required to bivouac in the field to perform specific tasks or undergo specialized military training.

[30] Conscripts with 1 year of military duty were usually discharged with higher military ranks, such as private first class, corporal, sergeant, sublieutenant, or above.

[31] Taiwan's joint military exercises and trainings include the Hankuang, Lianyong, Lianxing, Lianyun, Lianxin, and Lianxiang exercises. The military conducts live-fire exercises to mimic realistic combat

less information, experience, and training in realistic combats than their older counterparts. These differences may influence their expectations toward potential war as well as their attitudes toward cross-strait relations accordingly.

The TSCS asks two hypothetical questions that allow researchers to test whether the military reform changes people's attitudes toward cross-strait relations mainly through their expectations of potential war. The first question surveys people's opinions on peaceful independence: *Do you agree: if Taiwan declares independence and can still maintain peaceful relations with the CCP, then Taiwan should become a new country.* The second question pertains to willingness among the Taiwanese to voluntarily unify with mainland China: *Do you agree: if mainland China and Taiwan are comparable in terms of economic, social, and political conditions, then the two sides should unify.* These questions allow for an indirect examination of whether the military reform still affects people's opinions after removing a potential war risk. I recoded the answers to both questions to 1 (agree) and 0 (not agree) dummies and presented the outcomes in Table 8.

Columns (1)–(3) in Table 8 show that the military reform did not alter people's attitudes toward Taiwan's independence in a context without a cross-strait war,

---

situations during these events. For example, the Hankuang and Lianyong exercises involve the army, navy, and air force together. They implement computer-assisted command post exercises and live-fire drills to simulate responses to an attack against Taiwan by the forces of China's People's Liberation Army. The Lianxing exercise is part of Hankuang and emphasizes joint amphibious landing and antilanding combat exercises. The Lianyun exercise also belongs to Hankuang and focuses on joint airborne and antiairborne combat exercises. The Lianxin exercise brings together the Kinmen, Matsu, Penghu, Dongyin, and Wuqiu command units within the framework of outlying island defense operations. The Lianxiang exercise simulates a surprise aerial attack against important military facilities to ensure the capability of the joint air defense force.

highlighting the importance of expectations surrounding potential cross-strait war in the impact of the military reform. Simply put, the reduction in the military service period would make people hold different expectations of potential war and affect their attitudes toward cross-strait relations accordingly. Because conscripts serving a four-month duty receive less training and are less prepared for realistic combat, they may hold reckless attitudes toward the possibility of military conflicts across the Taiwan Strait. That is, conscripts undergoing four months of military service perceive less risk of war and tend to support pro–Taiwan independence issues. A similar conclusion can be deduced by observing whether one-year conscripts hold different attitudes toward removing war risk in Taiwan's independence issues. While initially only 36% of one-year conscripts support Taiwan's independence, such support increases to 63% if Taiwan can peacefully achieve it. These findings suggest that conscripts exposed to one year of military service would be concerned about the risk of war in cross-strait issues.

Finally, I examined whether the military reform affects people's attitudes toward Taiwan's peaceful unification with mainland China (Kastner and Rector, 2008). Columns (4)–(6) in Table 8 indicate that shortening the military service period would not affect people's willingness to voluntarily unify with mainland China. These findings verify that under peaceful scenarios, young Taiwanese males hardly react to cross-strait issues, suggesting the vital role played by potential cross-strait war in the impact of the military reform. One intriguing question pertains to which peaceful solution young Taiwanese males are more likely to support. As seen in Table 8, 63% of males who served one year of military duty support peaceful independence, while only 18% favor peaceful unification with China. This means that people who choose to solve the cross-strait

dilemma peacefully are inclined to support independence rather than unification. However, the absence of peace and independence, at least for now, perpetuates the dilemma of cross-strait relations.

7. Conclusion

This study evaluates the impact of a shortened conscription period on young Taiwanese males' attitudes toward Taiwan–China relations and their corresponding voting behaviors. Overall, the military reform enhances one's likelihood of holding Taiwanese identity and supporting Taiwan's independence by 10.5% ($\frac{0.09}{0.86} \times 100\%$) and 44.4% ($\frac{0.16}{0.36} \times 100\%$), respectively, compared with the control means. With respect to voting behaviors, Taiwanese males who undergo a shorter military service period were more likely to vote for pro-independence candidates in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election. The estimated effects are around 11.4% ($\frac{0.09}{0.79} \times 100\%$) relative to the control mean. The magnitudes of estimates are comparable with those in the literature. Chen et al. (2023) found that introducing a Taiwan-based curriculum leads to an 18-percentage-point increase in students' Taiwanese identity. In addition, Bai and Li (2020) showed that students exposed to China-based authoritarian education decrease their Taiwanese identity by 4.6 percentage points. It may be inappropriate to directly compare across studies; nevertheless, a 9-percentage-point increase in Taiwanese identity due to the military reform falls between the effects of Taiwan's authoritarian education and curriculum reform. The comparable impact of military service on national identity highlights its significance despite being considerably shorter in duration than the educational period. This research also identified the significant effects of the military

reform on opinions toward Taiwan's independence that were not found in Chen et al. (2023), suggesting intrinsic differences between military and educational policies. This study also qualitatively elucidated its empirical findings. Using two hypothetical survey questions on cross-strait opinions under peaceful scenarios, I conclude that shortening a military service period would make people adopt reckless attitudes toward armed threats from mainland China and increase their likelihood of supporting Taiwanese independence issues.

Collective identity formation has recently been the focus of researchers' attention (Bandiera et al., 2019; Bagues and Roth, 2023; Clots-Figueras and Masella, 2013; Cantoni et al., 2017; Cáceres-Delpiano et al., 2021; Depetris-Chauvin et al., 2020; Dehdari and Gehring, 2022; Esposito et al., 2023; Fouka, 2020; Kranton, 2016; Okunogbe, 2024). This study offers new evidence on how compulsory military reform influences the formation of a collective identity. The empirical outcomes also indicate that the military reform motivates young Taiwanese males to support independence from China and vote for presidential candidates who favor it. Given the increasing geopolitical risks of the Taiwan Strait, this study further provides insight into Taiwan's future military policy. Starting 2024, Taiwan's compulsory military service period will increase back to one year, highlighting the timeliness of this study. The impact of this new military reform is a question for future research to explore.
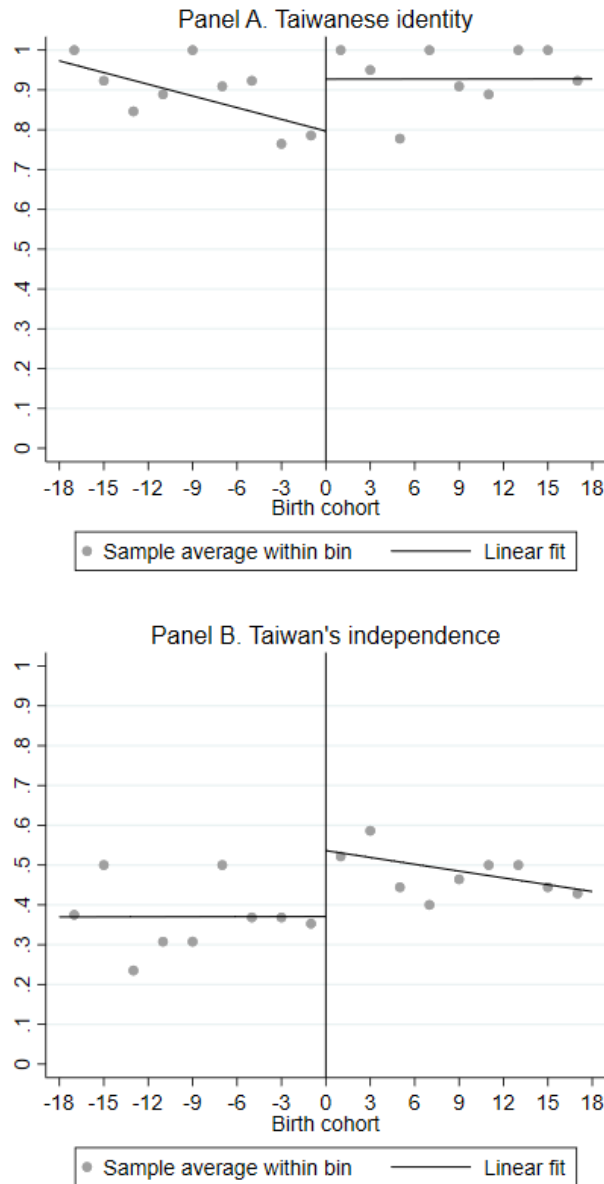
Figure 1: Unconditional distribution of attitudes toward cross-strait relations

Notes: This plot shows the unconditional distribution of attitudes toward cross-strait relations for males born 18 months before and after January 1994. To increase the sample size, each dot was grouped by two birth year-months. All variables were measured by 0 and 1 dummies. Taiwanese identity assumed a value of 1 if the respondent self-identified as Taiwanese and 0 if they self-identified as Chinese or both (Taiwanese and Chinese). Taiwan's independence assumed a value of 1 if the respondent supported Taiwan's independence and 0 if they supported unification with China or maintenance of the status quo.
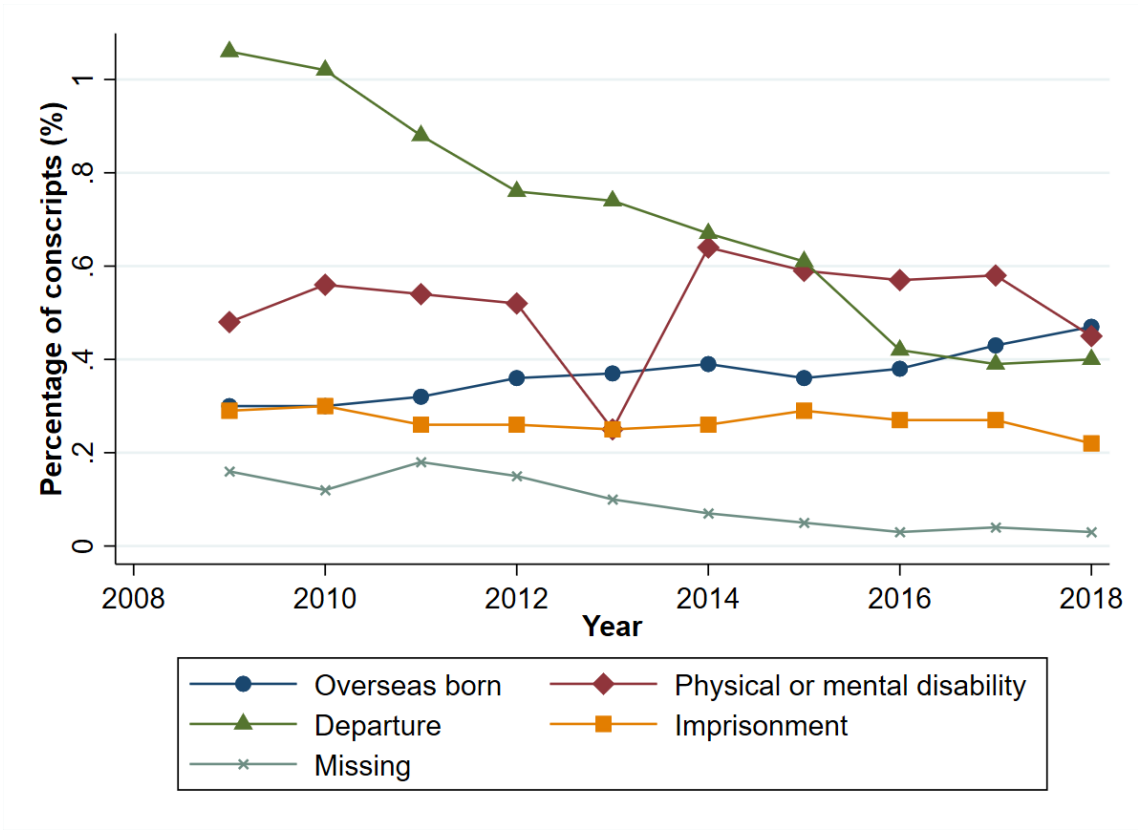
Figure 2: Percentage of conscripts excluded from recruitment between 2009 and 2018

Notes: This plot shows the percentages of conscripts excluded from the military recruitment process by reason. Conscripts were not successfully recruited because they were born overseas (overseas born), had a physical or mental disability (physical or mental disability), departed from Taiwan (departure), were in jail (imprisonment), or were missing (missing).
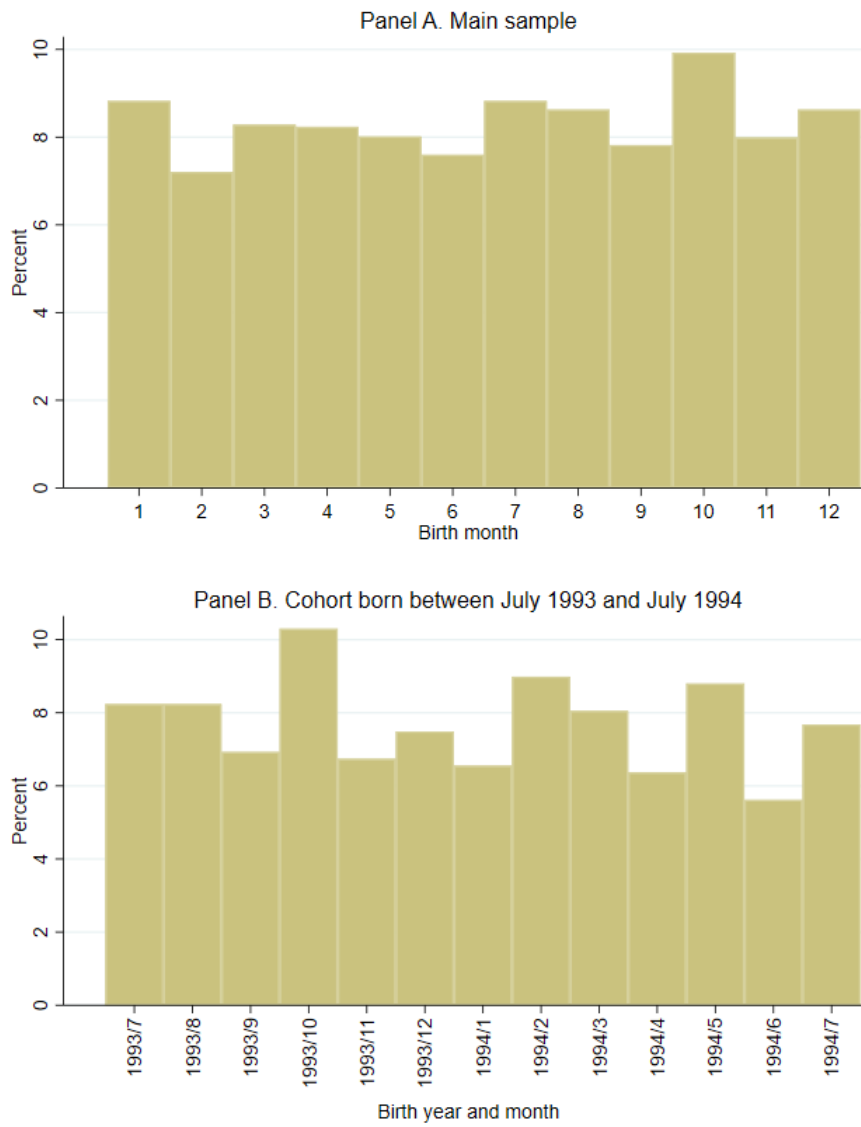
Figure 3: Distribution of birth month among the male sample

Notes: Panel A plots the birth month distribution of Taiwanese males born between 1989 and 1999. Panel B plots the birth month distribution among Taiwanese males born between July 1993 and July 1994.
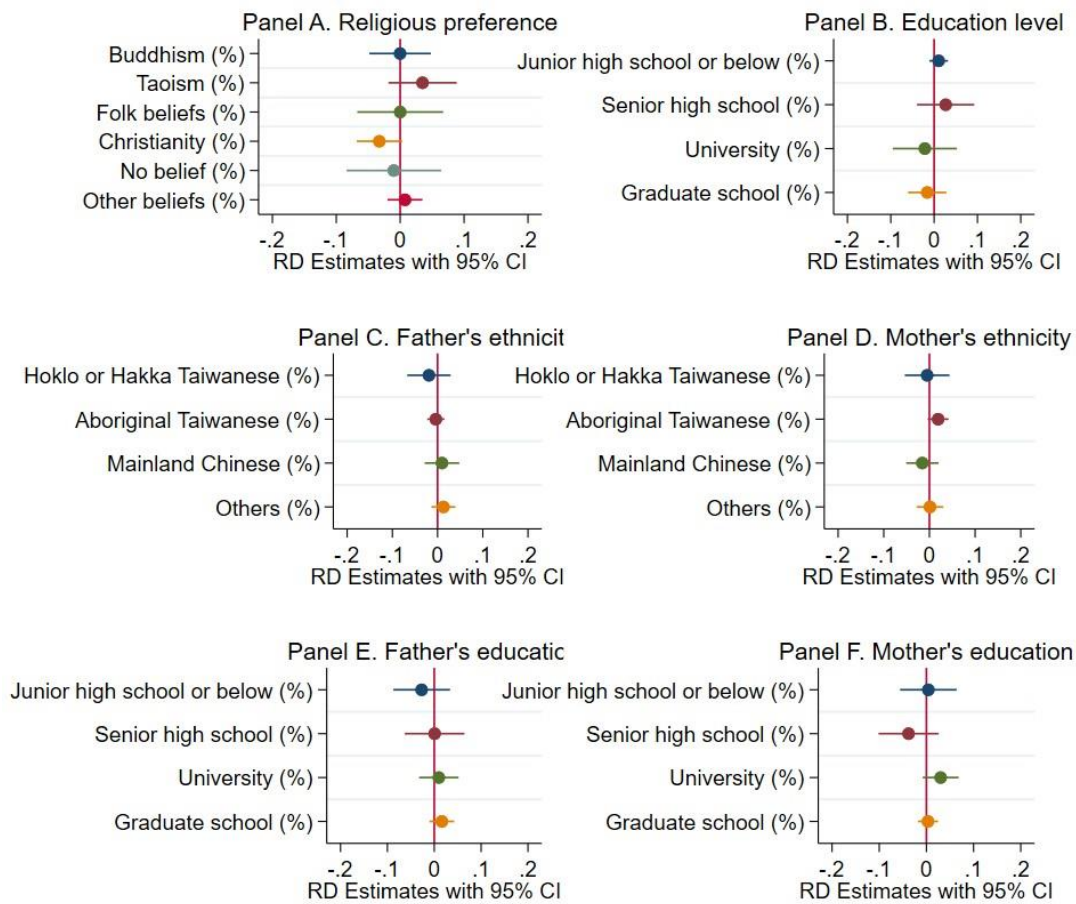
Figure 4: Covariate balance checks

Notes: This figure draws covariate balance checks between males exposed to four months of military service (treatment group) and those exposed to one year of military service (control group). Covariates include the respondent's religious preference, education level, and their parents' ethnicity and education.

Table 1: Military reform and attitudes toward cross-strait relations

| Outcome variables	Taiwanese identity			Taiwan's independence		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
2013 military reform	0.08*	0.09**	0.09**	0.14**	0.14***	0.16***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Individual controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
City and survey FEs	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Baseline mean		0.86			0.36	
Observations		652			836	

Notes: All specifications estimate the linear RDD regression with male cohorts born between 1989 and 1999. Taiwanese identity assumed a value of 1 if the respondent self-identified as Taiwanese and 0 if they self-identified as Chinese or both (Taiwanese and Chinese). Taiwan's independence assumed a value of 1 if the respondent supported Taiwan's independence and 0 if they supported unification with China or maintenance of the status quo. The 2013 military reform is a dummy for males exposed to a four-month compulsory military service. Individual controls included age, religious preference, and educational level. Robust standard errors clustered by birth year are in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.10$.

Table 2: Military reform and Taiwan's 2020 presidential election

Outcome variables	Voter turnout			Vote for DPP candidates		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
2013 military reform	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.10*	0.10*	0.09**
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Individual controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
City and survey FEs	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Baseline mean		0.76			0.79	
Observations		561			359	

Notes: All specifications run the linear RDD regression with male cohorts born between 1989 and 1999. Voter turnout assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election and 0 if they did not. Voting for Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidates assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted for DPP candidates and 0 if they voted for Kuomintang or People First Party candidates in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election. The 2013 military reform is a dummy for males exposed to a four-month compulsory military service. Individual controls included age, religious preference, and educational level. Robust standard errors clustered by birth year are in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.10$.

Table 3: Robustness checks with different bandwidths

Panel A. Compulsory military reform and attitudes toward cross-strait relations

Outcome variables	Taiwanese identity			Taiwan's independence		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
2013 military reform	0.05**	0.05***	0.05*	0.19***	0.19***	0.06**
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Bandwidth (months)	48	36	41.13	48	36	57.03
Baseline mean	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.37	0.36	0.37
Observations	544	436	484	703	559	630

Panel B. Compulsory military reform and Taiwan's 2020 presidential election

Outcome variables	Voter turnout			Vote for DPP candidates		
	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
2013 military reform	-0.05	-0.03	0.05**	0.06*	0.14***	0.06***
	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Bandwidth (months)	48	36	53.32	48	36	34.01
Baseline mean	0.74	0.75	0.75	0.79	0.81	0.81
Observations	473	366	593	305	232	422

Notes: All specifications estimate the linear RDD regression with individual controls, city fixed effects, and survey fixed effects. Columns (3), (6), (9), and (12) use the optimal coverage error rate bandwidth proposed by Calonico, et al. (2014). Taiwanese identity assumed a value of 1 if the respondent self-identified as Taiwanese and 0 if they self-identify as Chinese or both (Taiwanese and Chinese). Taiwan's independence assumed a value of 1 if the respondent supported Taiwan's independence and 0 if they supported unification with China or maintenance of the status quo. Voter turnout assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election and 0 if they did not. Voting for Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidates assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted for DPP candidates and 0 if they voted for Kuomintang or People First Party candidates in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election. The 2013 military reform is a dummy for males exposed to a four-month compulsory military service. Robust standard errors clustered by birth year are in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.10$.

Table 4: Robustness checks with the parametric approach

Panel A. Compulsory military reform and attitudes toward cross-strait relations

Outcome variables	Taiwanese identity			Taiwan's independence		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
2013 military reform	0.08**	0.08**	0.09***	0.17***	0.17***	0.16***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Individual controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
City and survey FEs	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Baseline mean		0.85			0.35	
Observations		970			1,227	

Panel B. Compulsory military reform and Taiwan's 2020 presidential election

Outcome variables	Voter turnout			Vote for DPP candidates		
	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
2013 military reform	-0.06	-0.08	-0.10	0.07*	0.08**	0.10**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Individual controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
City and survey FEs	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Baseline mean		0.75			0.80	
Observations		850			529	

Notes: All specifications estimate the second-order RDD regression with male cohorts born between 1985 and 2003. Taiwanese identity assumed a value of 1 if the respondent self-identified as Taiwanese and 0 if they self-identified as Chinese or both (Taiwanese and Chinese). Taiwan's independence assumed a value of 1 if the respondent supported Taiwan's independence and 0 if they supported unification with China or maintenance of the status quo. Voter turnout assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election and 0 if they did not. Voting for Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidates assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted for DPP candidates and 0 if the respondent voted for Kuomintang or People First Party candidates in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election. The 2013 military reform is a dummy for males exposed to a four-month compulsory military service. Robust standard errors clustered by birth year are in parentheses. ***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10.

Table 5: Military reform and female attitudes toward cross-strait relations

Panel A. Compulsory military reform and attitudes toward cross-strait relations

Outcome variables	Taiwanese identity			Taiwan's independence		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
2013 military reform	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.09
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.06)
Individual controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
City and survey FEs	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Baseline mean		0.92			0.44	
Observations		533			677	

Panel B. Compulsory military reform and Taiwan's 2020 presidential election

Outcome variables	Voter turnout			Vote for DPP candidates		
	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
2013 military reform	0.03	0.03	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.06
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Individual controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
City and survey FEs	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Baseline mean		0.76			0.79	
Observations		533			352	

Notes: All specifications estimate the linear RDD regression with female cohorts born between 1989 and 1999. Taiwanese identity assumed a value of 1 if the respondent self-identified as Taiwanese and 0 if they self-identified as Chinese or both (Taiwanese and Chinese). Taiwan's independence assumed a value of 1 if the respondent supported Taiwan's independence and 0 if they supported unification with China or maintenance of the status quo. Voter turnout assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election and 0 if they did not. Voting for Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidates assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted for DPP candidates and 0 if the respondent voted for Kuomintang or People First Party candidates in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election. The 2013 military reform is a dummy for females exposed to a fake four-month compulsory military service. Robust standard errors clustered by birth year are in parentheses. ***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10.

Table 6: Military reform and female attitudes toward cross-strait relations

Panel A. Compulsory military reform and attitudes toward cross-strait relations

Outcome variables	Taiwanese identity			Taiwan's independence		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
2013 military reform	0.02	-0.03	0.03	0.06	0.08	0.05
	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.03)
Bandwidth (months)	48	36	82.56	48	36	75.92
Baseline mean	0.91	0.90	0.91	0.44	0.44	0.43
Observations	444	370	683	575	471	646

Panel B. Compulsory military reform and Taiwan's 2020 presidential election

Outcome variables	Voter turnout			Vote for DPP candidates		
	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
2013 military reform	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.01	0.04
	(0.08)	(0.10)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Bandwidth (months)	48	36	82.35	48	36	69.56
Baseline mean	0.76	0.77	0.76	0.77	0.77	0.80
Observations	445	325	683	294	217	608

Notes: All specifications estimate the female sample using linear RDD regression with individual controls, city fixed effects, and survey fixed effects. Columns (3), (6), (9), and (12) use the optimal coverage error rate bandwidth proposed by Calonico et al. (2014). Taiwanese identity assumed a value of 1 if the respondent self-identified as Taiwanese and 0 if they self-identified as Chinese or both (Taiwanese and Chinese). Taiwan's independence assumed a value of 1 if the respondent supported Taiwan's independence and 0 if they supported unification with China or maintenance of the status quo. Voter turnout assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election and 0 if they did not. Voting for Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidates assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted for DPP candidates and 0 if the respondent voted for Kuomintang or People First Party candidates in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election. The 2013 military reform is a dummy for females exposed to a fake four-month compulsory military service. Robust standard errors clustered by birth year are in parentheses. ***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10.

Table 7: Military reform and female attitudes toward cross-strait relations

Panel A. Compulsory military reform and attitudes toward cross-strait relations

Outcome variables	Taiwanese identity			Taiwan's independence		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
2013 military reform	-0.00	-0.00	0.00	0.06	0.04	0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Individual controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
City and survey FEs	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Baseline mean		0.91			0.42	
Observations		848			1,052	

Panel B. Compulsory military reform and Taiwan's 2020 presidential election

Outcome variables	Voter turnout			Vote for DPP candidates		
	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
2013 military reform	-0.04	-0.04	-0.01	0.08*	0.07*	0.08
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Individual controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
City and survey FEs	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Baseline mean		0.76			0.81	
Observations		827			529	

Notes: All specifications estimate the second-order RDD regression with female cohorts born between 1985 and 2003. Taiwanese identity assumed a value of 1 if the respondent self-identified as Taiwanese and 0 if they self-identified as Chinese or both (Taiwanese and Chinese). Taiwan's independence assumed a value of 1 if the respondent supported Taiwan's independence and 0 if they supported unification with China or maintenance of the status quo. Voter turnout assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election and 0 if they did not. Voting for Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidates assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted for DPP candidates and 0 if they voted for Kuomintang or People First Party candidates in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election. The 2013 military reform is a dummy for males exposed to a four-month compulsory military service. Robust standard errors clustered by birth year are in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.10$.

Table 8: Military reform and attitudes toward cross-strait relations without war

Outcome variables	Peaceful independence			Voluntary unification		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
2013 military reform	0.04	0.05	0.04	-0.03	-0.05	-0.03
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.06)
Individual controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
City and survey FEs	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Baseline mean		0.63			0.18	
Observations		390			388	

Notes: All specifications estimate the linear RDD regression with male cohorts born between 1989 and 1999. Peaceful independence assumed a value of 1 if the respondent supported Taiwan's independence and 0 if the respondent did not, within the context of no war. Voluntary unification assumed a value of 1 if the respondent was willing to unify with mainland China, and 0 if they were not, within the context of being comparable to mainland China in terms of economic, social, and political conditions. The 2013 military reform is a dummy for males exposed to a four-month compulsory military service. Individual controls included age, religious preference, and educational level. Robust standard errors clustered by birth year are in parentheses. ***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10.

References

[1] Alesina, A., Reich, B., & Riboni, A. (2020). Nation-building, nationalism, and wars. *Journal of Economic Growth*, *25*(4), 381-430.

[2] Alesina, A., Giuliano, P., & Reich, B. (2021). Nation-building and education. *The Economic Journal*, *131*(638), 2273-2303.

[3] Batto, N. F. (2019). Cleavage structure and the demise of a dominant party: The role of national identity in the fall of the KMT in Taiwan. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, *4*(1), 81-101.

[4] Bandiera, O., Mohnen, M., Rasul, I., & Viarengo, M. (2019). Nation-building through compulsory schooling during the age of mass migration. *The Economic Journal*, *129*(617), 62-109.

[5] Bagues, M., & Roth, C. (2023). Interregional contact and the formation of a shared identity. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *15*(3), 322-350.

[6] Bai, Y., & Li, Y. (2020). Good bye Chiang Kai-shek? The long-lasting effects of education under the authoritarian regime in Taiwan. *Economics of Education Review*, *78*, 102044.

[7] Bove, V., Di Leo, R., & Giani, M. (2022). Military culture and institutional trust: evidence from conscription reforms in Europe. *American Journal of Political Science*.

[8] Balcells, L., Tellez, J. F., & Villamil, F. (2024). The Wars of Others: The Effect of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine on Spanish Nationalism. *The Journal of Politics*, *86*(1), 352-357.

[9] Cohen, E. A. (1996). revolution in warfare. *Foreign Affairs, 75(2),* 37-54.

[10] Chu, Y. H., & Lin, J. W. (2001). Political development in 20th-century Taiwan: State-building, regime transformation and the construction of national identity. *The China Quarterly*, *165*, 102-129.

[11] Chao, C. M. (2004). National security vs. economic interests: reassessing Taiwan's mainland policy under Chen Shui-bian. *Journal of Contemporary China*, *13*(41), 687-704.

[12] Chu, Y. H. (2004). Taiwan's national identity politics and the prospect of cross-strait relations. *Asian Survey*, *44*(4), 484-512.

[13] Chen, R. L. (2013). Taiwan's identity in formation: in reaction to a democratizing Taiwan and a rising China. *Asian Ethnicity*, *14*(2), 229-250.

[14] Clots-Figueras, I., & Masella, P. (2013). Education, language and identity. *The Economic Journal*, *123*(570), F332-F357.

[15] Calonico, S., Cattaneo, M.D., & Titiunik, R., 2014. Robust nonparametric confidence intervals for regression-discontinuity designs. *Econometrica*, *82*(6), 2295–2326.

[16] Cantoni, D., Chen, Y., Yang, D. Y., Yuchtman, N., & Zhang, Y. J. (2017). Curriculum and ideology. *Journal of Political Economy*, *125*(2), 338-392.

[17] Cáceres-Delpiano, J., De Moragas, A. I., Facchini, G., & González, I. (2021). Intergroup contact and nation building: Evidence from military service in Spain. *Journal of Public Economics*, *201*, 104477.

[18] Chen, W. L., Lin, M. J., & Yang, T. T. (2023). Curriculum and national identity: Evidence from the 1997 curriculum reform in Taiwan. *Journal of Development Economics*, *163*, 103078.

[19] Dupré, J. F. (2013). In search of linguistic identities in Taiwan: An empirical study. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *34*(5), 431-444.

[20] De Quidt, J., Haushofer, J., & Roth, C. (2018). Measuring and bounding experimenter demand. *American Economic Review*, *108*(11), 3266-3302.

[21] Depetris-Chauvin, E., Durante, R., & Campante, F. (2020). Building nations through shared experiences: Evidence from African football. *American Economic Review*, *110*(5), 1572-1602.

[22] Dehdari, S. H., & Gehring, K. (2022). The origins of common identity: Evidence from Alsace-Lorraine. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *14*(1), 261-292.

[23] Erikson, R. S., & Stoker, L. (2011). Caught in the draft: The effects of Vietnam draft lottery status on political attitudes. *American Political Science Review*, *105*(2), 221-237.

[24] Ertola Navajas, G., López Villalba, P. A., Rossi, M. A., & Vazquez, A. (2022). The long-term effect of military conscription on personality and beliefs. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, *104*(1), 133-141.

[25] Esposito, E., Rotesi, T., Saia, A., & Thoenig, M. (2023). Reconciliation narratives:

The birth of a nation after the us civil war. *American Economic Review*, *113*(6), 1461-1504.

[26] Fouka, V. (2020). Backlash: The unintended effects of language prohibition in US schools after World War I. *The Review of Economic Studies*, *87*(1), 204-239.

[27] Fize, E., & Louis-Sidois, C. (2020). Military service and political behavior: Evidence from France. *European Economic Review*, *122*, 103364.

[28] Gelman, A., & Imbens, G., 2019. Why high-order polynomials should not be used in regression discontinuity designs. *Journal of Business and Economic Statistics*, *37*(3), 447–456.

[29] Glaser, C. L. (2021). Washington is avoiding the tough questions on Taiwan and China. *Foreign Affairs*, 102-4.

[30] Gehring, K. (2022). Can external threats foster a European Union identity? Evidence from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. *The Economic Journal*, *132*(644), 1489-1516.

[31] Green, B. R., & Talmadge, C. (2022a). Then what? Assessing the military implications of Chinese control of Taiwan. *International Security*, *47*(1), 7-45.

[32] Green, B. R., & Talmadge, C. (2022b). The consequences of conquest: Why Indo-Pacific power hinges on Taiwan. *Foreign Affairs, 101*(4), 97-106.

[33] Glaser, B. S., Weiss, Jessica Chen, & Christensen, T. J. (2024). Taiwan and the true sources of deterrence: why America must reassure, not just threaten, China. *Foreign Affairs, 103(1),* 88-103.

[34] Ji, Y. (2006). China's anti-secession law and the risk of war in the Taiwan Strait. *Contemporary Security Policy*, *27*(2), 237-257.

[35] Kastner, S. L., & Rector, C. (2008). National unification and mistrust: Bargaining power and the prospects for a PRC/Taiwan agreement. *Security Studies*, *17*(1), 39-71.

[36] Kastner, S. L. (2015). Is the Taiwan strait still a flash point? Rethinking the prospects for armed conflict between China and Taiwan. *International Security*, *40*(3), 54-92.

[37] Kranton, R. E. (2016). Identity economics 2016: Where do social distinctions and norms come from?. *American Economic Review*, *106*(5), 405-409.

[38] Lee, D.S., & Lemieux, T., 2010. Regression discontinuity designs in economics. *Journal of Economic Literature*, *48*(2), 281–355.

[39] Lin, E. S., Wu, Y. H., & Chou, T. S. (2012). Country survey: Defense policy and military spending in Taiwan, 1952–2009. *Defence and Peace Economics*, *23*(4), 343-364.

[40] McCrary, J., 2008. Manipulation of the running variable in the regression discontinuity design: A density test. *Journal of Econometrics*, *142*(2), 698–714.

[41] O'hanlon, M. (2000). Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan. *International Security*, *25*(2), 51-86.

[42] Okunogbe, O. (2024). Does exposure to other ethnic regions promote national integration? Evidence from Nigeria. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *16*(1), 157-192.

[43] Pan, H. H. (2023). US public opinion on cross-strait relations: the effect of China threat on the China–Taiwan tension. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 1-18.

[44] Scobell, A. (2000). Show of force: Chinese soldiers, statesmen, and the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait crisis. *Political Science Quarterly*, *115*(2), 227-246.

[45] Schubert, G. (2004). Taiwan's political parties and national identity: the rise of an overarching consensus. *Asian Survey*, *44*(4), 534-554.

[46] Sullivan, J., & Lowe, W. (2010). Chen Shui-bian: on independence. *The China Quarterly*, *203*, 619-638.

[47] Sobel, R., Haynes, W. A., & Zheng, Y. (2010). The polls—Trends: Taiwan public opinion trends, 1992–2008: Exploring attitudes on cross-Strait issues. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *74*(4), 782-813.

[48] Setzekorn, E. (2014). Military reform in Taiwan: The Lafayette scandal, national defense law and all-volunteer force. *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, 7-19.

[49] Tarabar, D., & Hall, J. C. (2016). Explaining the worldwide decline in the length of mandatory military service, 1970–2010. *Public Choice*, *168*, 55-74.

[50] Tsai, C. H., & Tsai, T. H. (2022). Explaining change in independence–unification views in Taiwan: a within-between model. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *32*(2), 111-

130.

[51] Vlachos, S. (2022). On war and political radicalization: Evidence from forced conscription into the Wehrmacht. *European Economic Review*, *144*, 104086.

[52] Wu, C. K., Wang, A. H. E., Yeh, Y. Y., & Chen, F. Y. (2024). Public support for the use of force in non-Western and non-major powers: the case of a China–Taiwan war. *International Political Science Review*, *45*(1), 106-122.

[53] The most dangerous place on Earth; Superpower politics. (2021, May 1). *The Economist*.
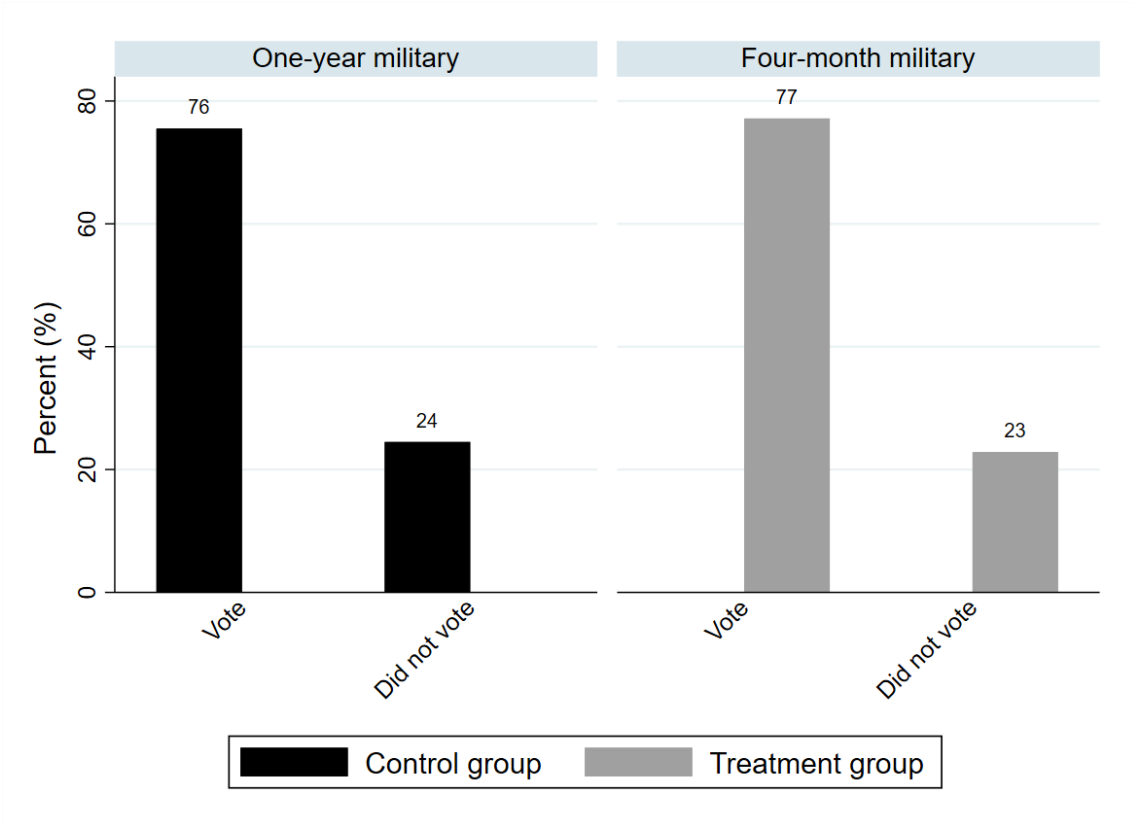
Appendix
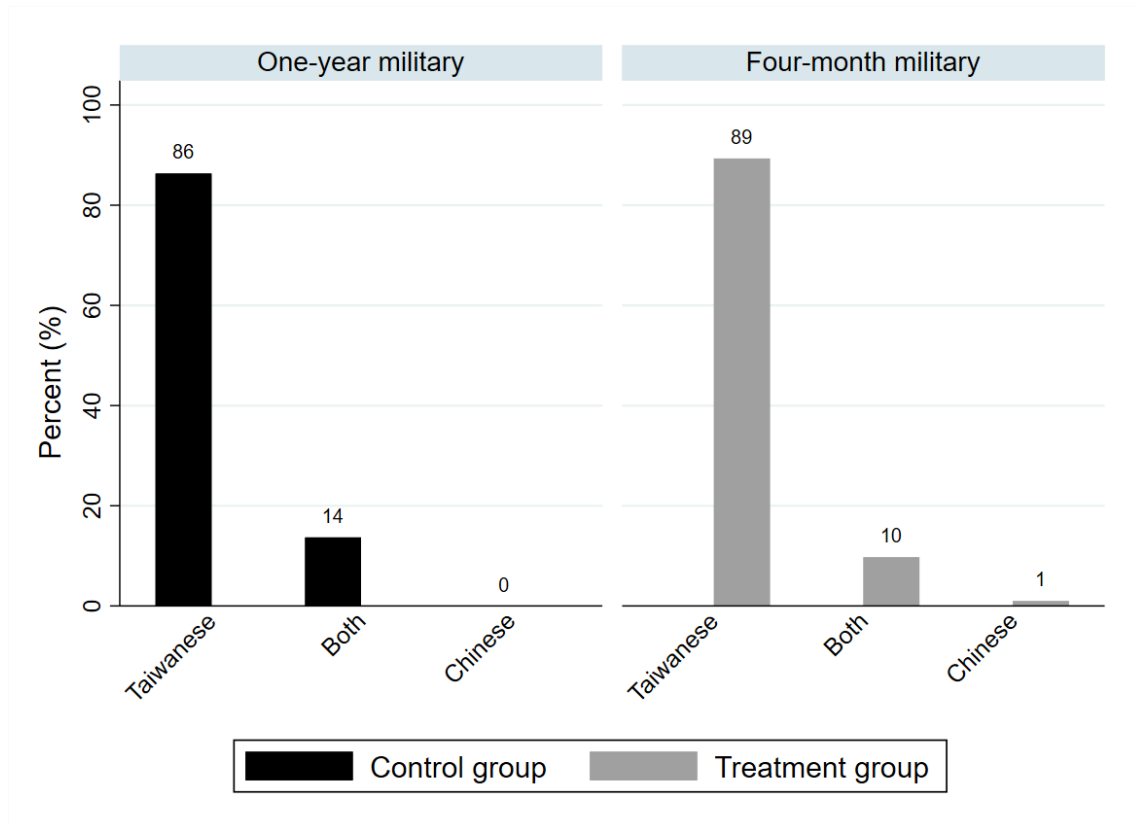
Appendix Figure A.1: Percent of responses to Taiwanese identity

Notes: This figure presents the unconditional percent distribution of each response to the Taiwanese identity question with male cohorts born between 1989 and 1999 (main sample). The treatment and control groups were males who underwent four months and one year of military service, respectively. In the empirical analyses, Taiwanese identity assumed a value of 1 if the respondent self-identified as Taiwanese and 0 if they self-identified as Chinese or both (Taiwanese and Chinese).
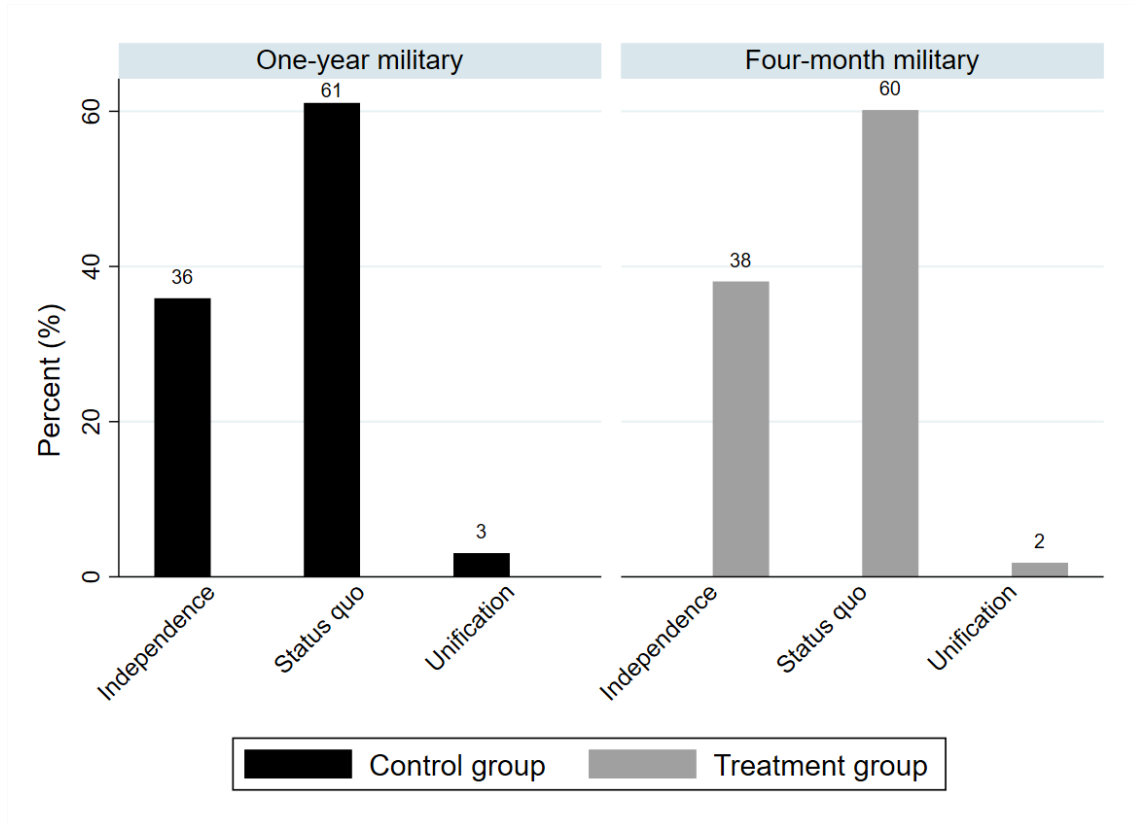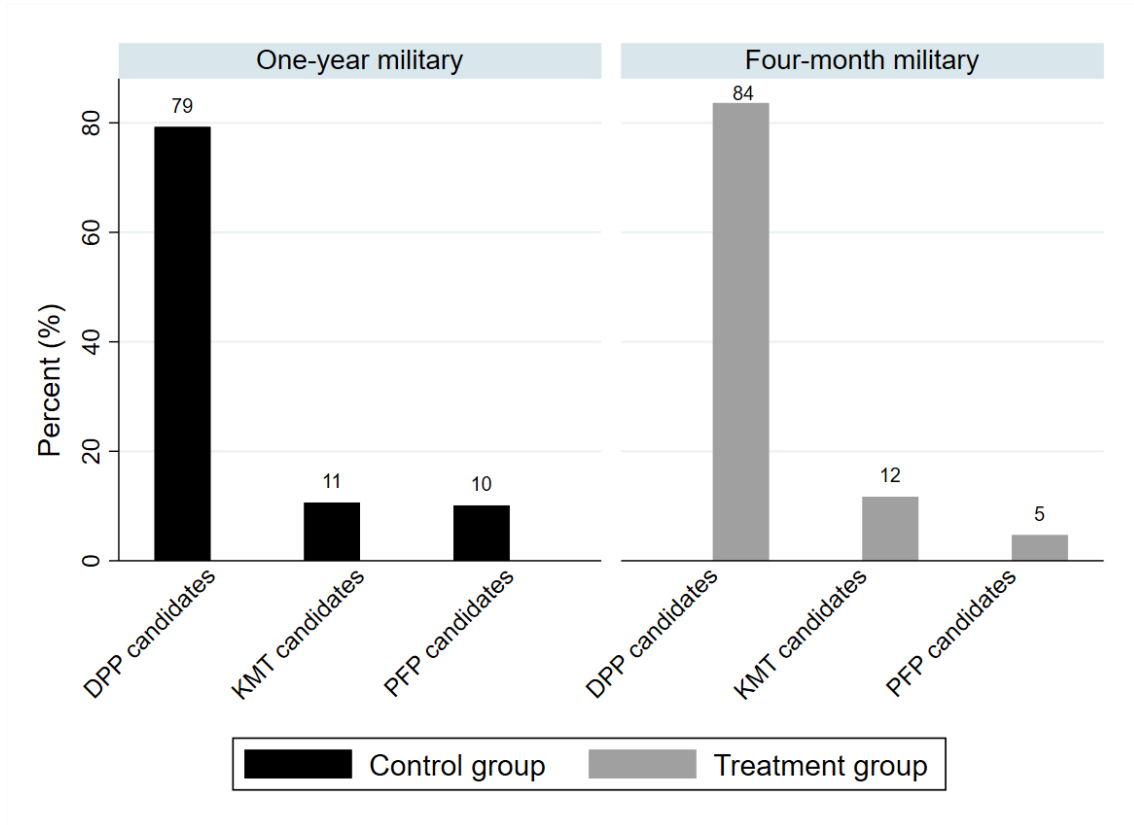
Appendix Figure A.2: Percent of responses to Taiwan's independence

Notes: This figure presents the unconditional percent distribution of each response to the Taiwanese independence question with male cohorts born between 1989 and 1999 (main sample). The treatment and control groups were males who underwent four months and one year of military service, respectively. In the empirical analyses, Taiwan's independence assumed a value of 1 if the respondent supported Taiwan's independence and 0 if they supported unification with China or maintenance of the status quo.

Appendix Figure A.3: Percent of responses to voter turnout in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election

Notes: This figure presents the unconditional percent distribution of each response to voter turnout in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election with male cohorts born between 1989 and 1999 (main sample). The treatment and control groups were males who underwent four months and one year of military service, respectively. In the empirical analyses, voter turnout assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election and 0 if they did not.

Appendix Figure A.4: Percent of responses to voting decisions in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election

Notes: This figure presents the unconditional percent distribution of each response to voting decisions in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election with male cohorts born between 1989 and 1999 (main sample). The treatment and control groups were males who underwent four months and one year of military service, respectively. In the empirical analyses, voting for DPP candidates assumed a value of 1 if the respondent voted for DPP candidates and 0 if they voted for KMT or PFP candidates in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election.

Appendix Table A.1: Fifteen TSCS data waves between 2013 and 2022

Survey wave	Registration number	Survey topic
TSCS 2013q2	C00224_2	National Identity
TSCS 2014q1	C00310_1	Citizenship
TSCS 2014q2	C00310_2	Religion
TSCS 2015q1	C00315_1	Globalization, Work, Family, Mental Health, Religion, Mass Communication, Political Participation, Leisure
TSCS 2015q2	C00315_2	Work Orientation
TSCS 2016q2	C00321_2	Citizen and Role of Government
TSCS 2017q1	C00339_1	Social Stratification
TSCS 2019q1	C00351_1	Social Inequality
TSCS 2019q2	C00351_2	Technology and Risk Society
TSCS 2020q1	C00369_1	Globalization, Work, Family, Mental Health, Religion, Mass Communication, Political Participation, Leisure
TSCS 2020q2	C00369_2	Environment
TSCS 2021q2	C00390_2	Health
TSCS 2022q1	C00395_1	Social Stratification
TSCS 2022q2	C00395_2	Gender

Appendix Table A.2: Taiwan's 2013 military reform

Characteristics	Taiwan's 2013 military reform	
	Before the reform	After the reform
Eligibility	Born between Jan 1, 1989 and Dec 31, 1993	Born after Jan 1, 1994
Service period	12 months	4 months
Training location	Transferred between different local military bases	Mainly stay in the same training center
Military rank	Private first class or higher	Private
Joint military exercises	More likely to experience and perform specific tasks	Less likely to experience

Appendix Table A.3: Balance check of individual variables

Individual variables	RDD estimates	Standard errors
Religious preference		
Buddhism	-0.00	0.02
Taoism	0.04	0.03
Folk beliefs	0.00	0.03
Christianity	-0.03	0.02
No belief	-0.01	0.04
Others	0.01	0.01
Educational level		
Junior high school degree or below	0.01	0.01
Senior high school degree	0.03	0.03
University degree	-0.02	0.04
Post-graduate degree	-0.02	0.02

Notes: Each variable takes the dummy form. All specifications estimate the linear RDD regression with male cohorts born between 1989 and 1999. The RDD estimates are the effects of the 2013 military reform on individual covariates. The 2013 military reform is a dummy for males exposed to a four-month compulsory military service. Robust standard errors are clustered by birth year.

Appendix Table A.4: Balance check of parental variables

Parental variables	RDD estimates	Standard errors
Father's ethnicity		
Hoklo or Hakka Taiwanese	-0.02	0.02
Indigenous people	-0.00	0.01
Chinese	0.01	0.02
Others	0.01	0.01
Mother's ethnicity		
Hoklo or Hakka Taiwanese	-0.00	0.02
Indigenous people	0.02	0.01
Chinese	-0.02	0.02
Others	0.00	0.01
Father's educational level		
Junior high school degree or below	-0.03	0.03
Senior high school degree	0.00	0.03
University degree	0.01	0.02
Post-graduate degree	0.02	0.01
Mother's educational level		
Junior high school degree or below	0.00	0.03
Senior high school degree	-0.04	0.03
University degree	0.03	0.02
Post-graduate degree	0.00	0.01

Notes: Each variable takes the dummy form. All specifications estimate the linear RDD regression with male cohorts born between 1989 and 1999. The RDD estimates are the effects of the 2013 military reform on individual covariates. The 2013 military reform is a dummy for males exposed to a four-month compulsory military service. Robust standard errors are clustered by birth year.